

**Approved**  
**Union Township Environmental Commission**  
**Minutes of the January 9, 2008 Regular Meeting**

The January 9, 2008 Regular Meeting of the Union Township Environmental Commission was called to order at 7:05 PM.

The notice of meeting as published in the Hunterdon County Democrat and the Courier-News satisfied the requirements of the Open Public Meeting Act, and was also posted in the Municipal Building, on the Union Township website and filed with the Municipal Clerk.

**A. Reorganization:**

Robert Nargi made the following nominations:

- Bill Harclerode as Vice Chairman. This was seconded by Michele McBride and unanimously approved by the members.
- Kathleen Corcoran as Secretary. This was seconded by Brian Kirkpatrick and unanimously approved by the members.

**B. Committee Members:**

- Open Space Committee: Sandy Stiger accepted continuation of her chair position. This was seconded by Brian Kirkpatrick and unanimously approved by the members.
- Equestrian Trails/Walking Trails/ Property Management Committee: Bob Beylickjian was nominated to continue his position as committee chair. Robert Nargi had spoken with Bob Beylickjian, and Bob agreed to continue this position. This was seconded by Brian Kirkpatrick and unanimously approved by the members.
- Planning Board: Brian Kirkpatrick was nominated to continue this position. This was seconded by Michele McBride and unanimously approved.
- Communication/Education Committee: Michele McBride was nominated to continue this position. This was seconded by Sandy Stiger and unanimously approved.
- Transportation/Road Noise and Mulhockaway Creek Stormwater Committees: Bill Harclerode was nominated and seconded by Michele McBride and unanimously approved by the members.
- Sidney Brook 319 Grant: Stephen Hurford was nominated as chair for the Sidney Brook Project. Stephen Hurford declined this position. Brian Kirkpatrick nominated Robert Nargi. This was seconded by Bill Harclerode and unanimously approved.

**C. Meeting Dates:**

Mr. Kirkpatrick pointed out that some dates have been changed based on election. It was suggested that the second Tuesday of every month at 7:00 pm be set as a preliminary meeting time.

**I. Roll call:**

Present: Kathleen Corcoran, Bill Harclerode, Stephen Hurford, Brian Kirkpatrick, Michele McBride, Robert Nargi, Sandy Stiger  
Absent: Bob Beylickjian  
Public: Patricia Dzubiek

**II. Approval of Minutes:**

Approval of the minutes from the December 11, 2007 meeting was moved by Mr. Kirkpatrick, seconded by Ms. McBride and unanimously approved.

**III. Old Business:**

**IV. Correspondence:**

1. The ANJEC membership is up for renewal, which will be submitted.

V. **New Business:**

1. Ms. McBride inquired as to whether there are any openings on the Environmental Commission, whether we should call for volunteers in the UTEC newsletter, and whether Commission members can also utilize the help of outside volunteers to help with subcommittees. Mr. Nargi stated that utilizing help outside of the Commission is acceptable, plus there is one opening on the Commission. If a UTEC member has somebody in mind to fill an open position, they should present this idea to the UTEC for input, and then the Mayor should be asked about filling the open position.
2. The proposed 2008 budget request for the UTEC is \$10,000, which is approximately what was spent last year.

VI. **Chairman's Report:**

1. Mr. Nargi reported that the Green Table Meeting is on Jan. 17, 2008 at 8:00 AM re: open space. Ms. McBride stated that she will try to attend.
2. Mr. Nargi would like to have ANJEC come to one of our UTEC meetings to discuss what Environmental Commissions do. It was decided that it would be preferable for this to occur during a regular UTEC meeting. Mr. Nargi will try to schedule this for our next UTEC meeting.

VII. **Committee Reports:**

**Open Space Committee:**

1. Ms. McBride reported that a meeting has been scheduled with LUCARS representative, the construction office, zoning official and possibly the planning dept. to discuss the LUCARS system on January 23, 2008 at 1:00 pm. Her understanding is that the system is not being used very much at all. The sales representative may want to come in and sell the Township an upgrade to the system so that it may be better utilized for our purposes.
2. Ms. McBride stated that she has reviewed the open space report and natural resource inventory versus the new one that Bethlehem Twp. did. She has identified the need to update the open space inventory mapping. Our report is excellent, but outdated. We will probably want to wait until the Highlands Draft Master Plan is finalized and we may also want to coordinate with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan mapping, COAH requirements, stormwater requirements, etc.
3. Ms. McBride stated that the NJ Trails plan is something that we should be looking at.
4. Ms. McBride stated that we could be utilizing national guidelines re: recreation and open space, which is based upon population, to determine how many softball fields, tennis courts, etc. we should have. This will help us determine if we have the right amount of open space set aside for recreation. We should also include quasi-open space in our plans.
5. Ms. McBride stated that we need to reestablish our open space planning objectives. We need to add more people to the Open Space Advisory Committee. Ms. Corcoran has offered to help the Committee. Others from outside the UTEC may also be sought.
6. Ms. McBride stated that the Highlands Third Draft Regional Master Plan is to be discussed on February 13, 2008 at Voorhees High School. The document is 394 pages now. The document includes information on water quality restoration and other objectives. It is all available on the internet. There are upcoming meeting requirements to learn about the plan and available grants for municipalities to conform to the plan.
7. Ms. McBride stated there are two meetings at Morris County Cultural Center, 300 Mendham Rd. Morristown, NJ:
  - a. ANJEC meeting on 1/15/08 at 7:00 pm
  - b. Highlands Coalition on 1/17/08 at 7:00 pm
9. There was some discussion regarding scenic vistas and the ability to include this in the Open Space Plan. Union Township already has these included in our plan, and the Hoffman Park site is included.

**Equestrian Trails:**

Per Mr. Nargi, Mr. Beylickjian had nothing new to report.

**Planning Board:**

1. Witte has come in for a driveway variance, which was granted.
2. Pilot has filed suit against the Planning Board and the Township Committee.

**Property Management:**

1. The RFQ for the Hoffman House, Mr. Kirkpatrick has researched the structure and format of the RFP, and is comfortable that it could be put out for bid, but must be discussed with Twp. Committee and attorneys regarding length of lease, permitted uses, funds to be used, etc.
2. Mr. Nargi stated that he has previously requested the deeds for the property to find out what can be done there. He has not yet received anything. He requested that Mr. Kirkpatrick try to request this information from the attorney.
3. Mr. Kirkpatrick stated that he knows that the adjacent property owner is interested in leasing a barn on the property.
4. Mr. Nargi stated that there was a tunnel between some of the buildings that has now caved in and is dangerous.
5. There was some discussion regarding what could be used for the property. It is a very scenic location, but it is significantly run down. There could be leasing options. Mr. Kirkpatrick has knowledge regarding public properties owned by the State of Pa. and Federal properties and leasing opportunities, under which the leasee can get financing to construct homes, etc. Rental options seem limited due to the condition of the property, and the limited resources regarding Union Township managing a rental situation. Horse related leasing is an option. Mr. Kirkpatrick suggested putting out an RFP that would allow parties to submit bids for what they would like to do with the property and for what price, i.e. get as many ideas as possible. The RFP would need to clearly indicate the legal restrictions. Mr. Nargi reinforced the need to get the deeds for the property, because we will have to work with the county and find out all legal limitations. It was agreed that some UTEC members would go before the Twp. Committee to assess whether they could use the Twp. attorney to investigate alternatives for the ultimate utilization of the Hoffman property. The county will be involved, so we are limited by what the County will allow.
6. Ms. Dzubiek, representing the Township Committee from the public, mentioned that the Hoffman property was part of the original COAH plan. Ms. Dzubiek welcomes all the ideas and hopes that something can be done with the property that will benefit the Township. She stated that the Hoffman Property was included in the "rehabilitation" aspect of COAH. Now, under the third round of COAH, we are obligated to provide 144 COAH units, which may have an impact on what is proposed for Hoffman.
7. Ms. Dzubiek stated that there is a distinct need to endorse either the Highlands Plan or the State Plan into our Master Plan and Open Space Plan, and if it doesn't fit, we shouldn't adopt it. Better to be proactive rather than reactive.
8. There was some discussion regarding the Highlands and whether we should endorse that plan. Highlands has funding available and they will have the "trump" power over the State Plan. There was some discussion regarding the involvement of the Environmental Commission in researching this issue. Ultimately, these planning and zoning changes will need to be undertaken by the Township Council.

**Noise:**

1. Mr. Harclerode stated that there was a Rt. 78 sub-committee meeting held on Jan. 2, 2008 between UTEC including Bill Harclerode, Kathleen Corcoran and Robert Nargi (partial mtg.) and Mr. and Mrs. Switlyk from the Township of Clinton. Mrs. Switlyk is preparing to create a website to better educate her neighbors and general public on highway related noise related correspondence, and other activities that are forwarding the cause of noise reduction along Rt. 78. It was agreed that the UTEC would wait until the website is created before we do a formal endorsement.  
Mr. Harclerode reiterated that all trucks should have a good muffler; the reason that the truck engine braking is so loud is illegal mufflers. Engine braking is a key safety issue to the truckers. It is only extremely loud when the mufflers are inadequate to muffle the noise. He suggested that the UTEC recommend that a letter be sent to increase the fines associated with illegal truck mufflers that cause excessive engine braking sounds, similar to Colorado, Montana and Washington State. Current fine in NJ is \$48. Mr. Harclerode's subcommittee is

recommending that we work with local municipalities along Rt. 78 and work with the County on this issue to increase fines to \$500. He is working on a letter to the appropriate officials. Mr. Harclerode has information re: engine braking, etc. available for those that are interested. Mr. Kirkpatrick made a motion that the UTEC support this effort. Mr. Harclerode stated that he plans to forward our recommendations to the County, other municipalities and our elected representatives and the NJDOT.

2. Mr. Harclerode has sent a letter to Conrail to find out how to make it a "quiet crossing". Mr. Harclerode will determine whether this is a DOT issue or just Conrail. He anticipates that the follow-up on this may take a little time.
3. Mr. Harclerode mentioned that there is a County meeting coming up related to truck engine braking, the scenic by-way designation for the I-78 corridor through Hunterdon County and sign ordinances.
4. The sign ordinance was discussed, and other township ordinances passed were also discussed, as there has been legal action. Mr. Kirkpatrick stated that he had been approached by representatives from another local township, and he stated that Union Township has recently hired a special attorney regarding billboards due to recent legal action regarding billboards, and we have updated our sign ordinance just as a precaution. He stated that there is an issue that billboard solicitors often try to get an ordinance overturned and slip in for approval while there is no ordinance covering their situation at all.
5. There was some discussion regarding the proposed engine braking ordinance and the sequence of Township approval. Typically, the Environmental Commission sends proposed ordinances through the Twp. Planning Bd. for review and comment, etc. before forwarding to the Township Committee for recommended adoption.

#### **Communication/Newsletter:**

1. Ms. McBride has been soliciting a lot of businesses on the Rt. 78 corridor to try to get small businesses to advertise in the UTEC newsletter. Ms. McBride has visited at least a dozen establishments along the Rt. 78 corridor. The goal is to get a couple thousand dollars to cover the cost of the newsletter.
2. Ms. McBride has received two articles from the Twp. Committee, Hoffman Park, Historical Society, engine idling, recycling requirements, road safety, etc. and other similar related articles that are ready to go. She hopes to launch a draft in early Feb. and go to print in late Feb. She is waiting for a drawing from the Twp. Engineer. Ms. Corcoran asked how many pages the newsletter would be. Ms. McBride responded that it would be at least 8 pages. Mr. Harclerode discussed a potential article regarding noise. There was some discussion that not feeding bears should be included in the newsletter. She is still accepting articles. Dick McManus (zoning officer) is also doing an article on the Highlands Act. Septic system information, approved by South Branch Watershed Authority will also be included. Mr. Nargi stated that the NJDEP would probably like to look the newsletter over before we publish it.
3. Ms. McBride has uncovered that the 3 haulers in town have different philosophies on recycling. Smith accepts recycles once a week, but Raritan Valley is every two weeks, and Kasper does not recycle at all. This is an issue, especially since the county is requiring more stringent recycling. Ms. McBride has heard from several Kasper customers that they will begin recycling when Kasper offers it. There was some discussion that the UTEC would discuss this with the Township Committee as to how to increase recycling among our local trash haulers. Ms. McBride presented a letter to present and the Committee voted that it was acceptable with some minor exceptions.
5. There was some discussion regarding exactly how the recycling is calculated and that it is most likely is not calculated properly due to the various parties collecting recycles. When residents bring recycles to the county, how is this calculated?

#### **Sidney Brook Project 319:**

Mr. Nargi reported that the protocol is set, and the UTEC will be part of the upcoming research project for Sidney Brook.

#### **Opt-Email**

Ms. Corcoran has been investigating other municipalities and how they go about website and email "opt-in" endeavors. This is something that Ms. McBride is also pursuing for the UTEC. Ms.

Corcoran suggested that the Township website should be updated more frequently to include meeting dates for all Township meetings. Also, meeting agendas should be put on the website, especially planning board meetings, in a timely manner.

VIII. **Hearing of Citizens:**

Ms. Dzubiek (representative from the Township Committee) contributed to the regular hearing (as noted). Ms. Corcoran asked about whether Twp. meeting agendas for the Twp. Committee and Planning Bd. could actually be updated to reflect the current events. Ms. Corcoran expressed that it is very frustrating that the calendar doesn't include everything and the agendas are almost never listed on the township website. Ms. Corcoran stated, "A resident should not have to attend a meeting just to find out what will be happening at that meeting."

Ms. Dzubiek stated that she would follow up with investigating this shortfall. Ms. Corcoran stated that she would forward links to some "opt-in" websites to Ms. Dzubiek.

IX. **Next Meeting:**

The next meeting of the Commission will be at 7:00 pm at the municipal building, at a date yet to be formally announced.

X. **Adjournment:**

Mr. Kirkpatrick asked for a motion to adjourn. It was approved by all.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Corcoran, Secretary